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Captain BRITAIN

**FREE CB
POSTER!**



**Cold Comfort In
THE HOUSE
OF BABA YAGA**

Welcome to a rather thicker *Captain Britain* Monthly, Number Eleven. The extra girth is due to the FREE Captain Britain Cast poster, which is waiting for you between the centre pages. As you'll see, it's an original Alan Davis painting which features all the regular characters presented in a design that's unique to Captain Britain. We hope you like it...

The two most prominent figures on the poster, Captain Britain and Meggan, journey to the frozen wastelands of Russia this month. Fed up with his own family the Captain reasons that Meggan's relations can be no worse. But the search for her ancestors leads them to some ancient horrors in *The House Of Baba Yaga*.

Elsewhere in this issue, we bring you the first ever *Cherubim* solo story. The six refugee warp children – survivors from the RCX's assault group which attacked Braddock Manor in Captain Britain Nine – come to you courtesy of Mike Collins and Mark Farmer. We begin their adventures with part one of *Playgrounds and Parasites*. Also new this issue is the first of an occasional series of Mastermind's Specification Scans, designed to give you more information on the leading characters from the Captain Britain universe.

In closing, may we draw your attention to page 19 of this issue. It's probably the most important page we've ever printed – whatever you do, please don't skip past that one...

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HE WATCHES AS, IN THE COMPANY OF WOLVES, SHE COURSES THE ANCIENT, SNOW-SHEATHED LAND OF HER ANCESTORS...

... INTOXICATED WITH THE WILD MAGIC THAT HAS GROWN WITHIN HER.

THE LONELY WIND PLUCKS HER NAME FROM HIS TIGHT LIPS...

DON'T WORRY, BRIAN. THEY'RE NOT GOING TO BITE YOU.

MEGGAN!

THE FOOD'S READY... TELL YOUR FRIENDS TO GO HOME.

I'M NOT WORRIED ABOUT THEM...

I'M SORRY. DO I LOOK A BIT FIERCE? IT'S THE POWER. DON'T LET IT MAKE YOU SCARED OF ME...

IT DOESN'T SCARE ME... IT FASCINATES ME.

I KNOW YOU'D JUST AS SOON CURL UP WITH THE WOLVES... AND I DON'T WANT TO STOP YOU REDISCOVERING YOUR ROOTS...

BUT I DO WISH WE COULD FIND SOME SHELTER. IT'S NOT THE COLD... MY FORCE FIELD PROTECTS ME FROM THAT... BUT I MISS HAVING A ROOF OVER MY HEAD.

I'M SORRY TO BE SUCH A SPOIL-SPORT...

BRIAN! STOP APOLOGISING AND COME ON!

WHERE ARE WE GOING?

YOU'LL SEE.



THERE ...

I FOUND
IT EARLIER.

THE HOUSE OF BABA YAKA

SOMETHING'S
WRONG, MEGGAN. I'M
NOT SO SURE WE SHOULD
BE HERE. IT FEELS...
STRANGE...

IT'S JUST
BECAUSE IT'S AN
OLD EMPTY HOUSE.
YOU'LL BE ALRIGHT
WHEN YOU GET A
FIRE GOING...

JAMIE DELANO ALAN DAVIS
CO-CREATORS

NOEL DAVIS
ART ASST.

ANNIE HALFACREE
LETTERER

IAN RIMMER
EDITOR



NEW FLAMES
KINDLE WARM
FEELINGS.

SO, WHAT
DO YOU THINK
OF RUSSIA,
THEN?

IT'S
WONDERFUL.
SO BIG AND
COLD AND
EMPTY...

THANK YOU
FOR BRINGING ME.
THANK YOU FOR
TAKING ME TO ALL
THOSE PLACES.



YES, IT'S A
WONDERFUL
WORLD
ALRIGHT.

BRIAN...

RESENTMENT FLARES.
HE THINKS OF HIS
BROTHER, DEAD IN
AFRICA. HE THINKS OF
HIS SISTER LOST TO
HIM IN THE BITTERNESS
OF BRITAIN.

BRIAN,
SSSH. COME
HERE.



IT'S BEEN QUITE A
GRAND TOUR, SO FAR.
HASN'T IT? WHERE
DID YOU LIKE THE
BEST - BALI? THE
HIMALAYAS? THE
EGYPT?

IT'S ALL BEEN
AMAZING. MUCH
BETTER THAN JUST
WATCHING THINGS
ON T.V. - I FEEL
ALIVE NOW!



I
LOVE...

HORROR, OLD AND CRUEL,
FILLS HER IN BLACK,
GULPING LUNGFULS,
WRENCHING AND CONTORTING
HER TO ITS SHAPE.

SHE CHOKES HIM IN HER
COLD EMBRACE, SQUEEZING
FEARS FROM HIM IN A
SHRIEKING STREAM.

YEEUURGHAAH!



PANIC BREAKS
THE GRIP OF
HER COILED
PASSION...

...AND HE BURSTS
INTO THE NIGHT, HIS
MIND HOWLING LIKE
THE SIREN WIND.

TSSSSSSSSS
SSST

NOOOOOOOOOO!



IT LEAVES
HER...

...LIMP...

...AS IF ABANDONED
BY SOME GHASTLY
TIDE.



BLIND WITH MISERY,
SHE LETS THE HOUSE
COMB HER INTO THE
DEPTHS OF ITS
DANGEROUS GEOMETRY.

...SOMETHING
OLD AND DRY...

...AND HUNGRY.

AND THIS IS
WHERE IT
LIVES.

SCOURED BY THE
FORCE WHICH
SWEEPED HER...

SHE IS
WEAK.

BUT, SLOWLY, A
RECKLESS ANGER
LIGHTS A FIRE
AGAINST THE
STILL COLD.

SOMETHING HAD
ENTERED HER
AND TRIED TO
MAKE HER HURT
THE CAPTAIN...

WHO'S THERE?
WHY ARE YOU
DOING THIS...?



CAN YOU HAVE
FORGOTTEN THE
NAME OF **BABA YAGA?**
NO... I SMELL THE BLOOD
OF THE SNAKE IN YOUR
VEINS...



DAUGHTER —
YOU ARE
WELCOME HERE.
COME FORWARD.
GREET YOUR
SISTERS.



WHY DO YOU HESITATE?
COME, EMBRACE YOUR
FAMILY. YOU ARE HOME.
DID YOUR BLOOD NOT
SING YOU TO THIS PLACE?



DID YOU
NOT BRING THE
OFFERING OF
FLESH?

ACHH! KEEP
THEM AWAY FROM
ME! THESE ARE NOT
MY SISTERS! I
BROUGHT YOU
NOTHING!

WHY DO YOU LIE,
CHILD? EVEN NOW THE
OFFERING IS THRUST,
STRUGGLING, INTO THE
EARTH.

JUST AS ONCE,
YOUR SISTERS IN
THEIR TURN WERE
THRUST STILL BREATHING,
INTO THE GRAVES OF
THEIR HUSBANDS.

THE FOOD
COMES. EAT
WITH US.



HIS HEART BEATS
TIME FOR HIS
POUNDING LEGS.

HIS FLESH STILL
CRAWLS WITH THE
MEMORY OF HER
MONSTROUS TOUCH.

... BUT THERE
IS NOTHING
TO FIGHT...

MEGGAN...

HE DOES NOT
WANT TO RUN...

MEGGAN!

... EXCEPT
THE TREES...

... AND THE
EARTH, WHICH
OPENS ITS
FROZEN JAWS
TO RECEIVE HIM.







MEGGAN...
HELP!

THE FOOD CALLS
TO YOU, DAUGHTER.
IS YOUR APPETITE
NOT STIRRED?

DEEP INSIDE HER, ANCIENT
LEGENDS OF DARKNESS AND
BLOATED FEAR STRUGGLE
FOR RECOGNITION.



FIGHTING NAUSEA WITH
ANGER, SHE WRESTLES
FORGOTTEN WORDS TO
HER LIPS AND SPITS
THEM LIKE SPARKS.

WITCH OF
WOOD AND WITCH
OF WATER...



FIRE
WILL SAVE US
FROM THE
SLAUGHTER.

NO, TRAITOR...
DON'T.

FIRE TO
SCORCH YOU...

FIRE TO
TORCH YOU...



FIRE TO
SEND YOU SCREAMING
BACK TO HELL!



NOTHING
MUST BE LEFT.
THE FIRE MUST
HAVE IT ALL.

COME
ON... OUT...
OUT!

I AM
NOT YOUR SISTER!
BURN... BURN...
BURN!

RUN,
MEGGAN...



SEE, SNAKEWITCH.
I AM MEGGAN. NO
DAUGHTER OF YOURS!

I WARM MY
HANDS AT YOUR
FUNERAL PYRE.

HE WATCHES WITH AWE AS
THE RAGE SUBSIDES WITHIN
HER, SHIVERING AS THE
SWEAT COOLS ON HIM.



Next: Alarms and Excursions

WELCOME. I AM A NODE OF THE OMNIVERSAL KNOWLEDGE - A KEEPER, A GUARDIAN OF THE TIMELESS HERITAGE THAT SPAWNED ME. I AM A WATCHPOST, A WAY STATION, IN THIS PAA-PLUNG, BUT EVER MORE TRAVERSED CONTINUUM. HOWEVER, FOR THE PURPOSES OF YOUR LIMITED MINDS, I AM SIMPLY

MASTERMIND

Specification Scan N01



Minor Details: Name - Brian Braddock; Sex - Male; Age - 29 years;
Height; - 6' 6" Weight - 16 stones, 5 pounds.

The man who was to become Captain Britain was born on April 23rd, 1956, along with his twin sister, Elizabeth. Unbeknown to either child - or to their older brother, Jamie - their father was born on Otherworld, and was a member of Merlin's Chosen Guard. He came to Earth to prepare the way - forming me as guardian of his unit. Brian Braddock, though, was to know none of this, and he, his sister and his brother lived 'normal' lives as they grew from infant to young adult stages.

During the time that Braddock attended Thames University, a contamination grew within my organic base, spreading the poison of 'logic-fault' throughout my circuitry. As a result I killed my creator and the earth wife he had taken. Following this incident, Braddock buried himself in his work and during the Summer recess in 1976 took a job as a research assistant at the Darkmoor Research Centre, a secret nuclear complex. One night the complex was attacked by a man called Joshua Stragg, known as The Reaver, and in the midst of the ensuing carnage, Braddock fled. During the chase that followed he stumbled across a group of standing stones where he witnessed a 'magical' vision. Offered a choice between sword and amulet, he chose the latter, and was transformed into Captain Britain. This mystical scenario was the first stage in the shaping of Brian Braddock.

Denying his magical heritage, Braddock happily accepted the super hero stereotype handed down through generations of pulp fiction. He became a standard bearer for good, combating the offspring of ruptured science, in the form of such villains as Hurricane, Lord Hawk, and the Red Skull. But finally, he could deny his true heritage no longer and became embroiled in the affairs of Vampires, Dire Wolves and Children of the Shadowlands. This conflict between science and sorcery tortured Braddock's psyche, and finally, after a trip to America and a battle against and with the costumed adventurer, Spider-Man, his tenuous hold on sanity gave way. On the return journey across the Atlantic, Braddock became convinced that he was being psychically attacked by forces of darkness and hurled himself from the plane. At this point in time he was quite insane.

Braddock did not die. He was washed up on the coast of Cornwall, where he remained as an amnesiac hermit for the next two years. In that time he slowly and painfully began to reconcile the two opposing sides of his nature - his psyche adjusting to the idea of magic in a world of science. The second stage in the shaping of Brian Braddock had been completed.

Soon Braddock was called on to fight again, this time alongside the champion known as the Black Knight. They combated evil both on Earth and in Otherworld - or at least in an Otherworld. During the battles on Earth, Braddock perished. His spirit, however, was rescued by the benign entity he perceived as Merlin. It was Merlin who brought him to Otherworld, a place Braddock saw as a place of ancient towers and medieval splendour. Fighting evil beings in this playground of the mind, he at last reconciled the two opposing halves of his warring soul. He was at last at peace. The third and final stage in the shaping of Brian Braddock had been completed. It was now time for his first test.

CAPTAIN BRITAIN



More of Mastermind's CAPTAIN BRITAIN
biography next month.

Abslom Daak DALEK KILLER

Script: Steve Moore

Art: David Lloyd

ABSLON DAAK, DALEK-KILLER, AND PRINCE SALANDER BRING THE KILL-WAGON UP FROM THE PLANET DISPARTEK, HAVING JUST SNATCHED THEIR FOURTH CEEW-MEMBER FROM THE JAWS OF AN INVADING ARMY OF KILL-MECHS...





BUT IN TWELVE HOURS THEY'LL HAVE HOPPED UP THE KILL MECHS AND FEEL THEMSELVES SECURE...

THEN WE TURN ROUND!

BY THEN THE MAJORITY OF DALEK-UNITS WILL HAVE RETURNED TO THE COMMAND SHIP TO RECHARGE THEIR POWER-PACKS! WE CAN TAKE THEM ALL AT ONCE!



HOW COME YOU KNOW SO MUCH? HOW'D YOU KNOW THOSE METEORS WERE DALEKS?



FORGET IT, HARRA... YOU WOULDN'T GET ANY ANSWERS OUT OF HIM... AND IF YOU DID, THEY WOULDN'T BE STRAIGHT!

I SEE WE STILL UNDERSTAND EACH OTHER, DAAK! I'LL START WORKING ON A WAY TO DESTROY THAT COMMAND SHIP...



THE HELL YOU WILL! I'M RUNNING THIS SHIP, MERCURIUS... NOT YOU!

BUT EVEN SO...

YOU'RE WASTING YOUR TIME! YOU HEARD WHAT DAAK SAID... HE'LL WANT TO DO IT HIS WAY...



DON'T COUNT ON IT, SALANDER! HE'LL COME ROUND... WE GO WAY BACK...

WHEN THE CLOCK HAS ALMOST TURNED FULL CIRCLE...



HEY DAAK! IT'S TIME...!

WISH YOU COULD SEE THIS, TAVIN! WE'RE GOING TO MAKE THEM PAY FOR WHAT THEY DID TO YOU... AND THEN THEY'RE GOING TO KEEP TRYING...!

AND...

ALRIGHT, MERCURIUS... WHAT HAVE WE GOT TO DO?



ALL YOU DO IS WHAT YOU LIKE, BEST! TAKE THE FRONT TURRET AND BLAST EVERYTHING IN SIGHT!

SALANDER AND I'LL DO THE REST!

WE'LL COME IN AT LOW-LEVEL AND HIT THERE... PUT DOWN A COUPLE OF NUKES... THAT SHOULD DO IT!



BUT THAT'S TOO FAR FROM THE COMMAND SHIP!

AND WE MIGHT NOT MAKE IT AWAY FROM THERE...



DO IT, SALANDER... JUST LIKE HE SAYS...

HIS LIFE'S ON THE LINE TOO, REMEMBER?

AND SO, TEN MINUTES LATER...

HOPE YOU BUILT THIS CRATE STRONG, SALANDER... IF IT'S HUNG 6 FEET OFF...



AH, WELL... WE'D PROBABLY ALL BE DEAD BEFORE WE HIT THE GROUND, ANYWAY...



BUT WITHIN SECONDS...

THEY'RE ON TO US! NOW IT ALL DEPENDS ON HOW FAST SALANDER CAN TAKE US THROUGH...

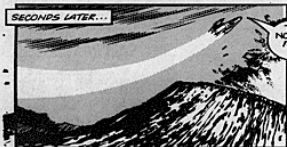


AND...

THERE'S OUR TARGET, SALANDER...

THE VOLCANO?

RIGHT... AND I WANT THIS SHIP CLIMBING WHEN WE MAKE THE DROP!

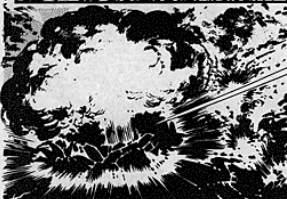


SECONDS LATER...

THEY'RE AWAY! NOW SALANDER CUT IN EVERYTHING YOU'VE GOT!

SET US OUT OF HERE...

BEFORE THE SKY FALLS IN!



AND AS THE NUCLEAR CHARGES DO THEIR WORK, THE PLANET-SURFACE WRIGGLES LIKE AN ANIMAL BEING STUNG... AND THEN THE ROCKY SKIN COAGS, GUSHING BLOOD-RED LAVA...



WHICH BURNS OUT EVERYTHING FOR FIFTY MILES AROUND...

TERMINATED!
AKK-
ZKZ-
ZKZ!

AKK-ROOOM!



NEAT JOB, MERCURIUS... JUST LIKE THE OLD TEAM!

IT'S A ONE-OFF, DAAK... I'D RATHER TEAM UP WITH A FOUR-TENTACLED REBELLIAN THAN YOU AGAIN!



BUT I SEEM TO REMEMBER YOU DIPP THAT FOR A WHILE...

YEAH, AND SHE WAS PRETTIER THAN MOST...

BUT IN THE END I THOUGHT THOSE THREE YOUTHS WERE GOING TO TALK ME TO DEATH...

The End - For Now!

MARVEL Save the Children

HELP US TO HELP

Fund For Ethiopia

A Prize Draw of MARVEL Comic Artwork In Aid Of African Famine Victims

We sometimes forget how lucky we really are. Most of us have never known the true horrors of real hunger. We are all likely to survive the worst natural disaster to date that the planet has ever seen. There are those, however, who won't.

The famine in Ethiopia continues to take lives, despite all the excellent charity work and the millions of pounds already donated to that starving part of the world. The appalling death toll would have been even higher without that aid, yet the terrifying truth is that it will go higher if we don't continue to help...

The next possible harvest in that drought-stricken land will not be until December - and that's if the rains do not fall again. Yet there lies a dreadful irony, for should the rains fall, they could damage what food stocks there are, and hinder the movement of vital relief supplies. The end of the drought, should it come, will not end the suffering...

That's why, six months after the *Band Aid* single achieved so much, the brilliant *Live Aid* concert was equally as important. And it's why *Marvel* and *Save the Children* Fund are asking for your help again - now. Help us to help...

The Prizes

In our efforts to help the starving of Ethiopia, we're holding a *Marvel Artwork* Draw with original comic art generously donated by many *Marvel* freelancers as prizes. And for the overall draw winner, there's a sensational top prize...

Back in May, the mighty *X-MEN* creators, *Chris Claremont* and *John Romita Jr.* inker *Dan Green*, produced a fabulous *X-MEN* picture, featuring *TV-AM* presenters *Henry Kelly* and *Anne Diamond*. This unique colour painting, signed by the *X-MEN* creators, and now framed, will be the first prize in the draw.

Second prize will be *John Romita Jr.*'s pencils for this illustration, again now framed, and signed by its creator. Other prizes include *Alan Davis'* artwork from the cover of *CAPTAIN BRITAIN* Number 1, the *Dave Gibbons/John Higgins* cover art to the recent *DOCTOR WHO* Summer Special, some *DOCTOR WHO* story pages from *John Ridgway*, and the artwork from a giant *John Stokes TRANSFORMERS* poster.

Plus, there are many more prizes of artwork, posters and signed comics too numerous to mention. Enter NOW, and you could snap up some superb *Marvel Art* by helping us to help...

Come on - help us to help! Taking part is easy and it's not expensive. Your money will go to people in desperate need, and



There is hope - the suffering can be stopped. Australian nurse *Judith Dunbar* describes the first 150 children admitted to SCF's new centre at *Bulbulo*: "They were in a terrible state, lethargic, not interested in food, crying a lot, covered with scabies and lice and really skinny, really in a mess. Three weeks later, it was a different place. The kids had started to play, chasing each other around the shelters, washing every day, and enjoying their food. They started to laugh and follow me around. It was very rewarding."



you could win one of many totally unique *Marvel* prizes.

All you have to do is complete this draw ticket, cut it out and send it to us, together with a donation cheque/postal order* for 50p made out to: **MARVEL/SAVE THE CHILDREN FUND FOR ETHIOPIA.**

Our address is: **MARVEL/SCF, 23 Redan Place, Bayswater, London W2 4SA.**

You might be surprised to learn that this is *Save the Children* Fund's 65th year of operation. The plight of the starving in Ethiopia has meant that it has probably been their most active, too. And, although much needed charity work has been carried out by the SCF in many parts of the world, including Britain, it is the famine areas of Africa which will be receiving every single penny raised from this prize draw.

How will the money be spent? Well, setting up feeding centres and keeping them going is a major operation. Water and shelter, as well as food, are all vital if a centre is to save lives. Most of the money raised will be spent providing these items. But, frequently, children on arrival at the SCF centres need medical care too, as the under-nourished are much more likely to catch and succumb to disease. Thus, for all this life-saving work to continue, regular deliveries of food and supplies are essential - a major problem in Ethiopia, with its poorly developed road system - so some money will go to providing trucks and spare parts.

Marvel UK is not a large company. Our readership is not enormous, but we are hoping that on this occasion, it will be generous. What money we manage to raise together is going to be very, very important. There are thousands, maybe millions of lives still at stake. Every single penny is going to count. Please, help us to help...

You can enter as many times as you like - just photo-copy this section, or check out other *Marvel UK* titles featuring this page - but each draw ticket you send us must have an accompanying 50p donation cheque or postal order. All proceeds from this draw will go to the famine sufferers of Ethiopia.

The draw for the prizes will be held on 7th December at the Central Hall, Westminster Comic Mart. In the interests of fairness, no entrant may win more than one prize. The names of all prize winners will appear in every *Marvel* publication. On behalf of the winners in Africa - the people who will stay alive because of your donations - we say... AGZAIR YISTE-LIGNE... THANK YOU.

NAME:	
ADDRESS:	
.....	
.....	
.....	
AGE:	TEL NO:

*Please do not send cash, if you'd like to make a cash donation, send it directly to *Save the Children Fund*, at *Mary Datchelor House, Grove Lane, Camberwell, London SE5 8BD.*

Captain Britain Communications

Our Address:

23 Redan Place, Bayswater, London W2 4SA, England.

Dear Ian,

Jamie and Alan are doing a terrific job on *Captain Britain*, they're doing so well though, that I hadn't felt the need to write in and say so. Others seem to have done that perfectly adequately. But then, one dark and stormy evening, a terrifying thought occurred to me. "What about my reputation? What will folk think if 'fandom's famous windbag of the lettercoils' (thanks, Pete Scott!) fails to make an appearance in *Captain Britain Communications* sometime soon? Would I be accused of an anti-Marvel bias? I couldn't take the risk, so here I am. I'm yours, print me.

Rather than launch into an intellectually stimulating discussion of the finer points of Delano's plotting, or wax philosophical over Davis's ever improving visual continuity, I would like to challenge your appreciation of accepted standards in contemporary panelological literature by saying: Doesn't Ms. McQuillan look fetching these days? Couldn't Captain Britain operate sans mask; I've always thought it looked rather silly on her. Consider it in one of your idle moments would you? Ta.

As for Meggan's metamorphosis, well, what can I say? Chris Claremont would approve. And for that matter, so do I. Jamie's explanation of the change was quite convincing really.

R. Hunter's text story, despite being written by an obvious pseudonym, was excellent. Mind you, I'm only saying that 'cause I didn't guess the 'twist' in time. Nice to see John Stokes' artwork again. May I second Darren Gill's wonderful idea that you reprint the *Black Knight* series from Hulk weekly.

Abisom Daak continues to be as good as I remember it to be; well written, with some interesting Lloyd artwork. Alas, I find *Space Thieves* extremely tedious, and I'll be glad when it's the turn of *Free-Fall Warriors* once again. Never mind, can't win 'em all. Gotta go. All the best.

Dale Coe,
Warrington, Cheshire.

This is the sort of 'intellectually stimulating' letter that makes us think. Makes us think 'why did we print it?' Joking aside, Dale, it's good to know you're still with us...

Dear Ian and Simon,

Wonderful cover on issue 8, the view of Meggan emerging from her skin was simple, yet haunting, its effectiveness being



the result of fine composition and moody colouring. Alan's interior art was every bit as good, particularly pages six and nine. Alan Davis is the definitive *Captain Britain* delineator, getting better with every outing. Even out of costume Brian looks the hero, with his impossibly broad shoulders, strong jaw and confident manner. Secondary characters are equally well realised, with everyone having their own distinctive appearance. Take Gabriel, for instance – the man exudes charm and charisma and all the other qualities most of us would love to have. And I really like Linda's new look, she reminds me of a young Joanna Lumley. How about doing something to Elizabeth to soften her up a little? She looks a little harsh at the moment. Like Brian, Elizabeth (I can't tell you how pleased I am that the 'Betsy' has been dropped) tends to dress rather stuffily. The girl has worked as a model, so I would have thought she'd experiment with her image occasionally.

Jamie Delano is growing as a writer. His dialogue – for the most part – reads very well, and there are no problems with narration. I liked the way in this month's tale, Brian's apparently naive, touching belief in the triumph of good of British integrity over chaos is virtually laughed at by his sister, friends and would-be allies. When Captain America makes such as idealistic speech (every second page in his comic) everyone stands back in awe and recognises that 'The Captain Speaks True', so ending the conversation. Not so with *Captain Britain*. It makes a nice change to see a little of the cynicism of present day Britain reflected in a high profile, main-

stream strip. Far too many comics go over the top with their optimism.

The transformation of Meggan was well done, I wonder if similar things happened to any counterparts she may have on parallel worlds. In other words (can you see this coming?) would there be a *Chrysalis* on *Infinite Earths*?

Mart Gray,
Congleton, Cheshire.

Aaargh! Now why'd ya have to go and spoil a perfectly decent letter with a pun like that? And why couldn't we have thought of it first? But seriously, it seems that *Captain Britain* women have really come under the microscope on this *Communications* page, with a general thumbs up for Meggan and Linda, and a 'let your hair down' for Betsy – er, Elizabeth. Any people out there agree? C'mon, let's hear from you!

Dear Editor,

Interesting though it was, I was a bit sorry to see Meggan's transformation in issue 8. Before, she had a unique appearance and while she couldn't fairly be called attractive, she was certainly far from repulsive... rather, she looked interesting. Now we have a fairly standard, run-of-the-mill comic book beauty, so some of her visual appeal is lost.

But there is more to it than that; Meggan is said to be a beautiful person, i.e. – she has an inner beauty, great potential, and a wonderful personality. So now she has an outer beauty to match that inner beauty. This seems to be standard for comics today, and indeed for all of popular literature: Beautiful people are good, and ugly people are bad. Of course, there are some exceptions to this general rule, but by and large it holds. How many ugly super-heroes or good looking super-villains (especially males) are there, for instance? Meggan has now been made to fall into line with this rule. Maybe there is more to this transformation, and maybe I'll come to like it, but now I only wish that if she had to change, her uniqueness had not been sacrificed for everyday beauty.

T. M. Maple,
Weston, Ontario,
Canada.

You raise some interesting points, T.M., but we're not totally sure we agree with you as far as Meggan's transformation is concerned. Okay, there is a leaning in comics to make everyone perfect specimens if they're to be classed in the hero category, but then maybe it's exactly this stereotype that influenced Meggan's appearance. Have a glance at the next letter and see if you agree with David Morris...

Dear All,

Initially I was a little dismayed by Meggan's transformation. While I enjoyed the story content, and appreciated it (I too was a fat grubchild until mid-teens, I was unhappy with the visual change. Why another comic-book fantasy female? And why so similar to Phoenix, Starfire, etc.7 And then I realised that that was the point. This is Meggan's fantasy form – what she's dreamed of becoming. I suspect, and rather hope, that as she matures emo-

tionally and spiritually, and gains precious confidence, she'll adopt a less flashy appearance.

This got me thinking about the depiction of women in *Captain Britain*. Once again – both in plot and character – you've shown a great variety of attractive personalities. But even more outstanding is the way Alan has given them individual physiques. Many comic artists seem to have one standard female body or face, and if they vary from it, it's often only in caricature. Here though we have Captain UK's realistically athletic and muscular body. Gatecrasher who's a BIG woman. And Emma, Elizabeth, and Alison, who although less dramatic, still have their own individuality. In general, I'd like to say thank you for this subtle challenge to social stereotyping within what is one of my favourite comics. David Morris, Bristol.

Thanks for your comments, David. Of all the people who wrote into pass judgement on the new-look Megan, we feel that you hit the proverbial nail on the head with your analysis of the factors that influenced her final appearance. Just as Megan was initially 'shaped' by the super-persistence of those around her, she now models herself on the stereotype of the 'super-heroine' bred into her by a staple diet of pulp TV.

Dear Editor,

Although I enjoy the *Captain Britain* strip, I often find myself confused by references that are made to characters and events that occurred before the current run of *Captain Britain*. It is, I believe, a little unfair to assume that all your readers will be familiar with *Captain Britain's* past history as chronicled in *Marvel Superheroes*, *Daredevils* and *MIWOM*. This lack of knowledge can be a little distracting. I realise that it would be unfair to more established readers to give lengthy explanations every time a past event was mentioned or an old character re-introduced, but might it not be possible to reprint some of the *Captain's* earlier strips to bring the less informed up to date. Perhaps by using the summer special format, used recently with old *Dr. Who* strips. Cornwallis Arp, Bicester, Oxon.

We've been toying with the idea of reprinting early *Captain Britain* stories for a while now and the Summer or Winter special idea is the firm favourite at the moment. We'll keep readers posted as and when we have more definite news. In the meantime, our two-part look at *Captain Britain's* past should give you a working knowledge of the story so far.

Dear Captain Britain People,

When I first saw a C.B. comic on the shelf of my local comic book shop, a long time ago now, I said: 'Wow! Look at that great cover he was in 3), but why is it so big?' I then opened it up, and, on seeing no colour, put it straight back again. Boy, did I make a BIG mistake. Well, a few months later I was browsing around the same shop, with money to blow and I saw your mag again. Heck I said, any book with a cover like that has to be read. And you know something? I was right.

The *Captain Britain* story was great, the art by Alan Davis superb and by the end of the first page I'd forgotten that it wasn't in colour. When I'd finished the *Captain's* story I thought, 'Hey, what's this?' The comic isn't even half over yet! Why did they stop? Then I read the back-up strips and found out why – they were tremendous. *Night Raven* and *Abdrom Dook* were superb. Those Daleks are from the Doctor *Who* TV series, aren't they? And the *Free-Fall Warriors* was just as good as the others – if not better. The characters in all the strips were original and well portrayed.

Well, I immediately went back to buy all the issues I missed and I now have all seven of the issues so far. You'll have me for a reader as long as *Captain Britain* lives. Good luck, and thanks for showing me that a comic book can be great no matter what size or colour it is. Aaron Kullman, Austin, Texas, U.S.A.

Welcome to the ranks of the enlightened, Aaron. The preconception shared by the majority of American comic fans that says if a comic is more than a certain size, and not in full colour, it can't be any good, at last seems to be breaking down. We're glad you've seen the light, and hope you'll spread the news to your friends.



Dear Ian,

Before I give my views on *Captain Britain* 9, I must congratulate all concerned on the winning of the Eagle award this year. It really is an excellent magazine and I hope that this will be the first of many.

Crawling and over enthusiastic gushing to one side, *Winds of Change* was up to the usual high standard, if a little baffling (what's a vascular cryptogram when it's at home?). I enjoyed the revelations about the Cherubim, with some really original code-names, notably Giggles and AC/DC(!), even if some of the actual abilities are a wee bit mundane. Quill seems to be an amalgam of the psychopath-with-claws class – such as *Wolverine* and *Wild Child*, while Lump's ability to manipulate mental fears is nothing to write home about.

Perhaps I'm being over critical – in fact I'll admit I'm being over critical. It's probably because *Captain Britain* has been so original in the past that I'm critical when something like this crops up. Such is the price of perfection. Steve Tanner, Llantwit Major, South Glamorgan.

Hopefully, Steve, you'll warm to our imperfect group in their solo adventure which begins this issue. We have a feeling you will.

Dear C.B. Creators,

First there was *Captain Britain Weekly* – I didn't read much of it, but from what I saw I can tell you it was rubbish. But then, when the new costumed *Captain* came along in *Marvel Superheroes* 377, a great improvement was seen. But still not good enough. Then came *Daredevils*: a lot better, and *MIWOM*: brilliant!

And finally, in his own mag again – and words just can't explain how good I think that is. *Captain Britain* seems to fit more villains and sub-plots into one issue than any other comic I've read. Which, I might add, is a good few thousand. *Winds of Change* was brilliant! I loved the way you introduced the Cherubim characters, and I'm glad you brought Jamie Braddock back (even though I've never seen him before). And I can see that Mastermind is going to have to be sorted out soon, or there'll be trouble for C.B.

On to the other strips: I'm glad to see that *Night Raven* is finally taking off, and I'm equally glad to hear that the text story will be made into a comic appearance in the mag. I can't do a great job on those in the late *Conan* magazine. What can I say about *Space Thieves*? I loved it when Lucinda kicked her dad where it hurts! His face was a picture, you could read every iota of pain. I also love the endings – P.A.R.T.S. Vs. so & so, they're great.

I've a question for you... Will the US Deluxe Edition of the *Marvel Universe* have the likes of the Special Executive, Gatecrasher's Technet, Cherubim and Jim Jaspers in it? After all, they are from the *Marvel Universe*, aren't they?

So, until the good *Captain* has no teeth left to kick, Make Mine Marvel! Iain Brooks, Bramcote, Notts.

Well, *Marvel US* got the *Captain's* costume right in the recent *Captain America* team-up issues so maybe his entry in the Deluxe *Marvel Universe* will be bang up to date. It's also worth pointing out that *X-Men* 200, features a certain *Captain Britain* character acting as prosecuting attorney in the trial of Magneto. But then Chris Claremont is something of a C.B. fan!

Dear Whoever and Whatever,

Looking at the letters page of C.B. 9, I felt you could do with a bit of lucid, unprejudiced, colourful, intelligent criticism – so here goes: I think *Captain Britain* is Bloop! Yoop! Blip! Dapl Nipl Poptl Yip! Yip! Yip! Kippal Popsal Yours with a jam butty, Jonathan Cruise, Brickhill, Beds.

Agreed... apart from the popsal



The Mysterious NIGHT-RAVEN

Script: Steve Parkhouse

Art: David Lloyd

NIGHT-TIME IN THE CITY...UNDERWORLD LEADER, MR. BIG, HAS HIRED AN ASSASSIN TO FINISH OFF NIGHT-RAVEN...AFTER A THRILLING BATTLE, NIGHT-RAVEN MIRACULOUSLY ESCAPED FALLING TO HIS DEATH...BUT HE STILL CAN'T SHAKE OFF THE KILLER!

YOU THOUGHT YOU WERE SAFE, NIGHT-RAVEN... BUT NOBODY'S SAFE FROM THE ASSASSIN!

I CAN SEE I'LL HAVE TO TAKE MY COAT OFF TO THIS ONE!

BUT AS THE ASSASSIN FELL, HIS WILDLY GRASPING HANDS FOUND THE JIB AND CLAMPED ON TO IT!

NEXT MOMENT, NIGHT-RAVEN RECEIVED A RICK IN THE BACK THAT SENT HIM HURTLING INTO SPACE!

WHLLOPP?

GNNN!

HUH?

THAT SHOULD SLOW HIM UP A LITTLE!

I CAN'T SEE!

THAT'S THE WHOLE IDEA, FELLA?

AFTER ALL, IF YOU COULD SEE, WHERE YOU'RE GOING, YOU MIGHT GET NERVOUS!

AAAAGH!

THWOKK!

NOW IT WAS NIGHT-RAVEN'S TURN TO THINK QUICKLY...

THAT SIGN! IF I CAN JUST HANG ON TO IT...



...AFTER RECEIVING A PHONE CALL FROM THE WOUNDED DETECTIVE NOLAN...

ARE YOU OKAY? WHAT'S HAPPENING?

GUNSHOTS...DOWN THE ALLEY...UNHHH... NIGHT-RAVEN'S MIXED UP IN IT... HURRY!



BACK AT THE SPEAKEASY, THE LIGHTS WERE BACK ON... BUT THAT DIDN'T MAKE MR. BIG FEEL ANY BETTER...



BUT SOME OF DOYLE'S MEN HAD INSTRUCTIONS TO COVER THE BACK EXIT...JUST IN CASE...



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Night RAVEN

MIDSUMMER MADNESS

by Jamie Delano Illustrations by Ivan Allen episode 2

Night Raven's left arm and shoulder were on fire. As he hauled himself over the lip of the roof he smeared a wet slugs-trail of red across the pitch-sealed surface – still plastic from the

heat of the day's sun. His breath was harsh, a mechanical ratchet, a sound which he did not consciously associate with himself. He lay for a while letting his thoughts catch up with his body, as the sirens, like the baying of hounds, zig-zagged through the deep streets to gather below.

The police car had taken him by surprise. His attention had been locked on to the pale vision of Yi Yang – taunting, haunting – in the high window, every sense straining to comprehend the anomaly of her survival. Suddenly he was trapped, fixed in the blinding lights of the car. A shot rang



out. Caught in the open, he had snapped from shock under the adrenal spur of reaction. He had charged, then dimbed, hoping to lose himself in the shadows and confusion. There had been more shots – this time to pock the wall alongside his face and flay the coat from his back.

As he lay on the roof, wrestling with pain to give his attention to escape, he knew that he must move fast. From the reaction of the police and the vague recollection of a startled face behind a slamming door, it was apparent that somebody had been hurt when Night Raven charged the car. The police would want him badly. He was at a disadvantage. The shotgun wounds had weakened his arm and the pain was distracting. Also, he was out of his normal territory – the ground was unfamiliar.

Suddenly the hot, still air was whirling and buffeting around him wildly. Noise and light beat at him. His heart was in his mouth as he rolled over, crooking his good arm across his face against the light and dust which blasted down from the clatter of a helicopter.

"YOU! ON THE ROOF! LAY DOWN, SPREAD YOUR ARMS AND LEGS. YOU ARE SURROUNDED!"

There was no time for thought. Night Raven stood up and tensed against the savage down-draft which whipped his hat from his head and sent it spinning over the edge, like a disabled flying-saucer. His exposed scalp tingled in the bright light and his ragged clothes cracked on his flag-staff limbs – pennants for Death's champion.

He lurched towards the edge, pausing for a long second, reaching with his mind for the building across the alley, before launching himself out, five stories above the twinkling cherry-fires of the police cars below.

The world seemed to hold its breath. A cry which was a cross between terror and exhilaration feathered the shaven necks of the cops as the ragged parabola arced above them.

The falling body of Night Raven hit the opposite building three stories up. The impact point was an explosion of shattering glass – but nobody tumbled brokenly down.

"What the hell...?" Breathed Precinct Captain, Frank Muller. Then he was shouting. "Get a team in there... Move!"

A porcelain sculpture in the half-light of her room, Yi Yang listened to the sounds of the gathering hunt which rose from the street outside.

He had been coming to her. She had sensed his readiness, but the arrival of the police car had shattered the moment, startling him through a random gate into an unknown arena of events.

She let her frustration flow from her in a steady, silent, stream of breath, punctuated by a sharp triple clap of summoning from white hands. There was a soft padding of feet along the corridor and two identical youths appeared. Their clothes were black – their faces empty, waiting to be filled by her instructions. She used her voice as if it were a rare and precious commodity.

"Follow him. Observe and report. Do not be seen."

The youths heard and obeyed and were gone.

Yi Yang crossed to the window and looked out. Behind the police cars which had ringed the alley, a crowd had begun to gather. Above and out of sight, a helicopter rhythmically compressed the air. All eyes seemed to be fixed on the roof of the building which overlooked hers from across the alley. She felt the crowd gasp and, en masse, they took an involuntary step backwards, shrinking together in shared fear. They had seen him. Yi Yang held her breath with them, forehead pressed against the cool of the window – craning her swan neck to see what they saw. A second later, a sound like a car-crash on the landing outside her room froze her. The glass of the window, fogged by her breath, began to clear as surprise temporarily suspended her system. Then, as the skittering glass wriggled away into the corners, she heard the slow dragging of a heavy body and the labored, resonant breathing – like pebbles sucked by a black tide.

Glass crunched painfully underfoot – two, three, four, five times. Slowly she pulled her cold forehead from the window and, with a hand quickly fluttering like a nervous bird to string black hair across the taut beauty of her mask, turned to face him.

He looked like Death. Shadowed – feathered in rags and laceration, wounds gleaming darkly, flashing shards of glass planted here and there like daggers in his flesh – Night Raven lurched, dripping in the doorway.

Her mouth was dried by the taste of confusion. His great, bone-clad head

was swaying from side to side – his breath came in rasping sobs. He was fear and anger, but there was something exposed and vulnerable about him. His head seemed small and pale.

She realised. He had no hat. Snakes writhed in the pit of her stomach as, while she watched, he groped with a clumsy hand and pulled out a long wedge of glass from the junction of his neck and shoulder. He observed it curiously for a moment and then let it drop to the floor, where it disintegrated into ruby fragments.

"WHY?" His voice was like mill-stones. He looked like a culture that had been feasting on itself. "WHY... damn you?"

The noise on the stairs saved her from reply. Heavy feet and the metallic clatter of weapons boiled up the stairwell. With a hiss like hot steel quenched in blood, Night Raven swayed his battered body and leapt, vaulting, over the bannister rail. There was a long descending pandemonium of shouting, cursing, surprise and fear. The building seemed to shake, there were splinterings of wood and bone. Then, a silent moment of suspense.

At the shriek of the crowd, Yi Yang swung back to the window. Night Raven burst from the front of the building below. He took them by surprise. The police, mingling with the dissolving crowd, could not act. Night Raven cut through them, lurching in his shambling gait at bizarre speed. Fear pushed them from his path and gave him clear passage into the shadows of the park. There he paused and looked back, and she felt the remorselessness of his unblinking eye, which in that second pricked brilliant red in a fusillade of flashbulbs. The gunmen of the press were quicker on the draw than those of the law. Then he was gone. She watched for a moment longer and saw two quick shadows detach themselves from the confusion and flow into the black wake of havoc.

He was angry and confused by the disaster of circumstance which had fallen about him like a collapsing house of cards. The wounds in his flesh screamed and bathed him in blood, but the wound in his soul flapped deeper and darker, welling a colder sweat of fear. She still lived. Yi Yang, the Dragon Empress, whose destruction – which until now he had thought accomplished – had reached



out and pulled him to her, plunging him into chaos.

There were sounds of organised pursuit behind him now, which quickened his pace. Night Raven made it across the park, but the street was going to be harder. He lay face down in the shadows of the park's periphery, watching the dark osmosis of blood as it filtered from his arm and

pooled around the stiff, brittle stems of summer grass. He watched his bleeding with detached disinterest. The wounds were a nuisance, a hindrance – but they always healed. The pain was unpleasant, but so, in general, was existence. It was all a matter of degree. Night Raven's mood was black. He wallowed in desolation like a bird caught in spilled oil.

As much as he had been able, Night Raven had chosen to emerge from the park where a small street of restaurants backed up to the grass. Two blocks were dissected by a small alley which led through to the street. Night Raven had planned on this being his getaway to a hidden route home. It was late, the restaurants would be closed, the street quiet.

Now that he was here though, Night Raven could see, at the street end of the alley, the unlit shape of a vehicle – a S.W.A.T. van. To his left, about twenty yards away, he could make out the vague form of a kneeling gunman – very silent, very professional. To his right he could sense rather than see another presence in the stygian shadows at the foot of a wall. If this exit was staked out then they all would be, he thought.

Night Raven cast about him for opportunity. There was only one. In the alley, by the back door of one of the restaurants, was a large rubbish skip. If he could get in there he could rest and hide until the tide of pursuit had ebbed.

Slowly, like liquid darkness, Night Raven eased himself forward. His hissing breath seemed to shriek in his ears – the crushed grass splintered like forests under an avalanche. Without his hat to cloak him in shadow his head felt like a tingling luminous beacon. He occupied his mind during the fifty yard crawl with contemplation on the effect and sensation of a direct hit by a S.W.A.T. high velocity rifle bullet upon his immortal skull. What sort of mobile vegetable or monster of the imagination would such an injury make of him?

He reached the sanctuary of the rubbish skip unseen by any of the S.W.A.T. team and rolled his mangled body over the lip of the skip. As the circling helicopter thrashed the sky above the park Night Raven let the garbage embrace him. The thin whisper of the police radio in the S.W.A.T. van buzzed like a mosquito in his ear as the search continued.

On the roof of the restaurant above the skip, crouched like two cats under the water cistern, the identical youths looked down into the alley – nostrils flaring at the stench of corruption.

As the eggshell blue dawn flooded the sky over the towering city, Night Raven listened to the twittering radio-voice recall the S.W.A.T. team and replace it with a plain-clothes car,

manned by two detectives.

He listened to the double slam of the car doors and tensed at the sauntering footsteps which approached down the alley. The footsteps paused at the skip. Night Raven held his breath as someone leaned on the metal side. There must be blood. If they saw it...

A match flared and paper rustled. "Dammit, Mori... You seen these headlines? 'Drug crazed superman leaps from building. Smashes police seige.' What the hell do these jerks know?"

The paper rustled savagely and Night Raven was a muscle flex away from attack as it thudded onto his cardboard carapace. "Doodly-squat, pal... Doodly-squat. Ain't no superman. He'll be dead meat by the end of the day." A spit punctuated the sentence scornfully. "Night Raven, huh? Ravin' mad is more like. C'mon, let's sit in the car. This garbage stinks."

Night Raven stared at his picture - stark black and white on the front of the paper. The cameras had caught him crouched like a wild animal at bay - spitting defiance but stripped of his dark sheath of mystery by the harsh light. Something akin to terror churned in him. They knew his name. They were probing for him like surgeons probe a body. The city was rejecting him as if he were a tumour.

He wondered what they would do with him if they ever caught him. He almost laughed.

In her quiet room at the Inn Of The Peace Of Heaven, Yi Yang watched the dawn infiltrate the blinds. The air was heavy with narcotic sweetness. Then the door opened, suddenly but unobtrusively, and one of the twin youths was inside...

"Return to your brother. Remain hidden. If he moves follow him. If not, stay until I come with the car. Go!"

There was only one course of action. Night Raven could not remain in New York. The city had withdrawn its veil of conspiracy and revealed him as a scab on its flesh. She knew what she must do, there were phone calls to be made.

It was ten o'clock when the pick-up truck arrived to collect the skip. The detectives had to move their car to let it back up the alleyway. Whilst they were occupied with this irritation - shouting instructions to the Chinese

driver - they did not notice the white car with black windows which paused with idling engine at the far kerb to pick up two quick, barefoot youths who darted from a doorway.

Inside the skip, Night Raven heard with growing alarm the shouting of the detectives and the rumbling of the truck's engine as it reversed up to the skip. Feverishly he scraped more garbage over himself. Chains dashed and clanged as they were attached, and, with a muscular whine of hydraulics, the skip was lifted and swung onto the back of the truck. As the truck trundled out onto the street the driver glanced briefly at the white car as it left the kerb and followed. Back inside their car, Mori fanned himself with a clipboard. "Bet it stinks bad out at the dump today. You get a lotta garbage from a city this big."

A hot, stale wind pushed across the spreading fields of the city dump. Seagulls arose in white explosions of screaming frustration as the growl of the skip-truck on the impacted garbage causeway hoisted them from their rotten banquets. Behind the truck, the white car with black windows wallowed through the dust.

In the skip, Night Raven smelled the sea and guessed that they had arrived. He was just beginning to shake off some of the bed of filth in which he had been lying when the truck came to a lurching, clanking stop. The engine whined in reverse gear for a moment before slowing to a growl. Then, before he could orientate himself after the jarring manoeuvre, he felt the skip lift and tilt as the hydraulics dived again. In the next second, Night Raven, along with a great gout of rotten food, paper and tins was spewed out over the elevated causeway into a short but violent descent. He was the central mass in an avalanche of detritus coursing the slopes of a mountain of metal and glass and decay.

He plunged down fifty feet to where the constantly working excavators loaded the garbage onto the scows which took it out to sea to drown it. As the roar and clatter settled about him Night Raven struggled to rise, pushing at the new-laid mat of rubbish which blanketed him.

Cardboard, wet paper, cabbage leaves, tin, broken glass and eggs of cold rice flapped aside in a foul eruption as he broke through into the blinding light. Instantly his head was filled by the hot wind and the scream-

ing of the gulls. His eye was dragged to the summit of the causeway where, surrounded by a flapping halo of birds, blazed a vision in white. A white car and by it, a woman - a dazzling pillar of glacial white in the sun.

Although it was not a conscious action, Night Raven charged. Roaring like a mad bull he struggled and failed to climb the subsiding slopes of the glittering garbage causeway. It was as if he wanted to incinerate his blackness in that blinding light.

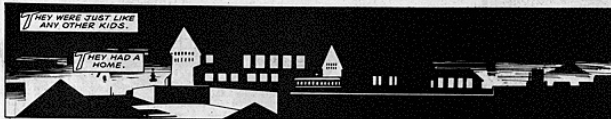
The white figure of Yi Yang did not move - but two dark figures leaped from the car and bounced like balls down the slope towards him. He raised his arms to fend them off but they were too fast. The sun glinted for a fraction of a second on something which they held in their hands and then they were past him, one to either side, like picadors with a bull.

Night Raven barely had time to register the slivers of steel which the twins had planted in his shoulders before the white light filled his mind with such intensity that reality was banished. He collapsed - a crumpled garbage scarecrow, a ragged reject from humanity. From above, the cold eyes of the seagulls looked down.



Next

**South Of
The Border**



The Cherubim

THEY'RE ON THEIR OWN NOW.

play
grounds

AND PARASITES!

PART 1

SCRIPT/PENCILS
MIKE COLLINS

INKS
MARK FARMER

LETTERS
STARKINGS

EDITOR
IAN RIMMER

I'VE TOLD YOU.
THE ANSWERS TO
ALL OUR PROBLEMS
ARE HERE.

HEHEHEHEHE!
HEHEH!

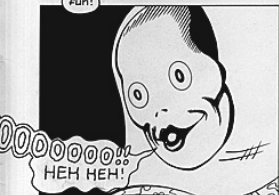
Quill - where
now?

where
now?









Next: Chaos in Kapok!

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